

Montana Tourism & Recreation Strategic Plan 2003-2007 2005 Annual Report

A. MANAGING INFORMATION

A.1 Maintain the Lodging Tax for Tourism Promotion & Development through Enhanced Awareness of Its Uses, and Tourism's Benefits & Impacts

Montana Historical Society: MHS will work to educate the legislature and the public about the use of these funds and their import.

A.1.1 *Build Citizen Awareness about the Benefits/Impacts of Tourism & Uses of Lodging Tax*

Custer Country: Executive Director has presented MIKA presentation on the benefits of tourism to 10 groups. Others have requested the program, and we will be scheduling those soon.

Gold West Country

Vision

- Mike Steele, President of Gold West Country, will go around to different organizations within our region with a Tourism and Lodging Tax Education presentation.
- We will participate in a local tourism and recreation show and pass out information on the benefits of tourism and the bed tax dollars. We will also encourage people to visit the many attractions in our area.

Challenges

- Organize the presentation to meet different audiences and different time frames.
- Contacting the organizations and proposing a need to set up the presentations.

Partnership Opportunities

- Partner with area chambers, Kiwanis, Rotary Clubs, ranchers and other organizations to disseminate the information.

Russell Country: We will continue to work with the Great Falls Tribune and other daily and weekly newspapers throughout Russell Country to have positive articles published about our marketing successes. We will work to attain publicity for tourism and the lodging tax on our area television and radio stations.

- Challenges include working with a changing roster of reporters and finding time to work with the individual media.
- Partnerships include working with the Great Falls CVB, nonprofit tourism entities and for profit tourism suppliers.

Montana Promotion Division

Marketing Program

- Tourism Road show: conduct meetings around the state to educate citizens about tourism and present the Tourism 101 seminar
- Newspaper Business Section promo: consistently submit tourism dept. activities in the business section of the newspapers, i.e.: trade show attendance, etc.

Electronic Marketing Group

- The Electronic Marketing Group of Montana Promotion Division will support this by adding a section to the intranet site that will contain educational content about the benefits of tourism to the state.

Film Office

- Challenges: The Montana Film Office needs to ramp up on-going PR efforts. We would like to implement an in-state public awareness campaign about the benefits of film production in Montana, and what our office does.
- Partnership Opportunities – The film office encourages media coverage, and speaking engagements.

West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce

Vision

West Yellowstone Montana (WYM) will continue its local radio program that began in early January of 2005. The initial vision was limited to provide information to our community on upcoming events and plans. Currently the talk program runs from 10 to 15 minutes once per week. We look, now, to expand our vision to:

- ✓ Increase the exposure time and allow for “call in questions”
- ✓ Gain more participation by locals as volunteers (and future leaders) and as resources of great ideas.
- ✓ Highlight the cooperation between various community groups.
- ✓ Better educate all of our citizens about the importance of tourism as they relate events and marketing efforts with better business or more wages earned.

Partnership Opportunities

- Currently we are cooperating with the radio station as this is free programming for us
- We will invite our “public sector” partners to participate in the programs in such things as:
 - ✓ Helping all to understand some of the public land issues that face our community
 - ✓ Helping all to understand some of the rules and regulations of public land use
 - ✓ Illuminating all of the ways that our public sector is our partner
- We will invite our “event” partners to participate in the programs in such ways as:
 - ✓ Making the community aware of their events
 - ✓ Making citizens aware of the interaction that occurs between WYM and the various events.

Challenges

- To keep making the program ever more popular and effective
- To keep the program on the air
- To find sponsors should that become needed

Yellowstone Country

- Provide area Chambers copies of State's updated Tourism 101 and YC 301 (information piece about YCMI) to present in communities (2005-2006)
- Provide informational training for VIC personnel (2005, ongoing annually). Each Chamber/VIC rep in region will have attended training session by May 2005. Success will be measured by having each VIC employee be informed and knowledgeable about tourism on the community, region and state levels.

Challenges

- Keeping VICs and front line staff in businesses educated and informed about the tourism industry in general, and about the events, attractions, etc in the communities, region and state, thereby achieving the objective of encouraging visitors to stay longer.

Partnership Opportunity

- Work with other industry partners to develop a cohesive training program that is cost effective, efficient and feasible for businesses.

A.1.2: *Build Awareness among Elected Officials about Tourism's Impacts & Benefits*

Custer Country: Custer Country is participating with the other Regions and CVB's in Tourism Treat Tuesday to keep tourism uppermost in the minds of the legislature.

Big Sky Convention & Visitors Bureau

Partnership Opportunities:

- The opportunity for our CVB to be involved with and be recognized by state and county officials is addressed in this priority. Big Sky has a community which understands the importance of tourism to our economy, but because we span two counties and are far from the Gallatin and Madison County seats, often the officials that represent us overlook the important role that Big Sky plays in the areas of tourism and business growth to the county and state economy and how we are affected by their actions and their decisions regarding tourism and business development.

Challenges:

- We face a challenge of being involved with or being recognized by our local (county) and state officials on various levels. We are challenged because we span two counties, so our representatives fall between Madison and Gallatin Counties; we are far from the Gallatin County seat which is in Bozeman, and we are far from the Madison County seat which lies in Ennis. Our location coupled with the fact that we have no local officials - meaning that we have no government in Big Sky- poses the challenge of where we fall and who represents us on the state and county level. It is known statewide that Big Sky is a valuable contributor to the bed tax and to the tourism business in the state, yet still we feel inadequately represented by our county officials because we have no local officials representing us on that level.

Glacier Country

Partners

- Regions, CVBs, Members, and Board

Challenges

- Funding for tourism events and participation by board and members with events.

2004 Actions included

- Executive Director testified at DNRC hearing regarding use of bed tax to pay for fire fighting costs February 2004 - Stuart Doggett of MIKA presented new bed tax PowerPoint at March 9, 2004 board meeting Executive Director to attend Libby networking session March 26, 2004 - Invited new gubernatorial and legislative candidates to April & May 2004 Board Meetings - Executive Director did tourism week interviews May 2004 - Executive Director spoke to Lakeside Chamber of Commerce May 25, 2004 - Jay Robson & Linda Anderson put 04 plan together - Invited candidates to September board meeting - Tourism event in Helena being planned for 3/14 & 15/05 - As well as Tourism Treats & MT. Tourism Coalition Function at 2005 Governor's Conference - Board will staff the tourism treats.

Gold West Country

Vision

- President Mike Steele from Gold West Country will contact legislators in the region and help educate them on the benefits of tourism and the bed tax as well as on any proposed bills that need extra efforts on stressing our viewpoints.
- Gold West Country will participate in Tourism Treats on Tuesdays during the legislative session. We will distribute a tourism fact along with the treat to help legislators grasp important information regarding tourism. We also are educating them on the different areas and regions within the state and the far-reaching hands of this economic sector.

Partnership Opportunities

- Partner with the other regions and CVBs.
- Partner with the innkeepers association.
- Partner with our lobbyist.

Challenges

- Getting the project orchestrated.
- Creating an actual organization identity recognizable to the legislators.
- Keeping the tourism benefit information fresh in the legislator's minds.

Russell Country: Russell Country will continue to invite area legislators to attend our monthly board meetings. Legislators will be given time to talk at the meetings, however, the primary purpose is for them to listen to us to learn how we conduct our business and spend the lodging tax. Russell Country board members are encouraged to be at the state capitol March 1st when we will deliver our Tourism Treats to the legislators. We will continue our One-to-One meetings with Russell Country legislators.

- Challenges - the difficulty of getting time with individual legislators, the size of the new legislative districts and the geographic size of the tourism region.

Tourism Advisory Council: TAC's Public Awareness Committee will continue to work with Travel Montana to keep its Tourism presentation up to date and useful in presentations during the legislative sessions and with other elected officials throughout the Strategic Plan period.

Yellowstone Country

- Tourism Treats (2005)
- Legislative Event for elected officials in Helena w/other regions/CVB's (2005)

- Host meetings with region's elected officials (2005/06)-- YC Board of Directors will host one-on-one meetings and/or a luncheon or dinner to inform/lobby area legislators about the value of tourism and the bed tax. Success will be measured by our ability to raise awareness among our legislative representatives. Ongoing priority.

Challenges

- Effectively informing/meeting legislators in a timely manner that is conducive to getting the message to them: i.e. what, when, where, how.

Partnership Opportunity

- Partnerships with other stakeholders are currently being discussed/implemented.

A.1.3: *Seek Endorsements from Communities & "Non-Tourism" Organizations*

A.2 Conduct Strategic Promotions that Attract Top Priority Markets

A.2.1: *Coordinate Advertising to Maximize State, Regional & Private Return on Investment*

Custer Country: We have participated in joint advertising with Travel Montana in publications including *Good Housekeeping* and *The Calgary Press* to promote travel to Custer Country to sectors not reached previously.

Glacier Country

Partners:

- Marketing Committee, Ad agency, PR agency, Call Center

Challenges:

- More private/public dollars always needed

2004 Actions included:

- Solicited & Received private funding to attend the LA Times Travel Show - Worked with several organizations on the RMI Mega Fam - Participated in online media buy with Glacier Country businesses to generate over 20,000 inquiries in the first month - Linda attended meeting with local businesses and CVB's to coordinate consumer trade show attendance - Glacier Country seeking private sponsorships to attend Seattle & LA Times Travel Shows - Glacier Country & 3 CVB's shared cost of ad in Pacific NW Meeting Planner's Guide - Participated in online media buy with Glacier County members again in the fall/winter of 2004.

Russell Country: Russell Country will be a partner in joint venture print opportunities offered by Travel Montana. Our primary print media buy will be partnership between Russell Country and the Great Falls CVB. Media dollars from both organizations will be used to place the ads. Russell Country will pay for ad design. For our consumer exhibiting projects, we will solicit partnerships with other tourism organizations and the private sector.

- Challenges include the timing of getting information about joint venture opportunities and limited marketing dollars.
- Partnerships – Great Falls CVB, Travel Montana, non-profit tourism organizations, for profit tourism suppliers.

A.2.2: *Encourage Cross-Promotion between Tourism Partners & Sectors*

Glacier Country

Partners

- Marketing Committee, Ad agency, PR agency, Call Center

Challenges

- Getting enough participation from members and getting packaging and then getting enough participation

2004 Actions included

- Go West Trade Show with Travel Montana - Spring Packaging E-Direct Mail, press release, and web page - Participated in online media buy with Glacier Country businesses to generate over 20,000 inquiries in the first month - 04 NTA Night Attendance - Glacier Country seeking private sponsors to attend LA Times & Seattle Travel Shows - Glacier Country & 3 CVB's shared cost of ad in Pacific NW Meeting Planner's Guide - Participated in online media buy with Glacier County members again in the fall/winter of 2004 - Executive Director to attend SWOT meeting with FWP

Montana Arts Council: The Montana Arts Council is continuing its work to encourage tourism partners to increase the profile of cultural offerings in all its promotional material. MAC is also encouraging the arts sector to work with the various promotional offerings and structures of the tourism partners.

A.2.3: *Consider Options for Film Production Incentives*

Montana Promotion Division

Film Office

- The Montana Film Office has spent the past year preparing for the 2005 legislature. Working with the TAC film task force, the film office contracted with Bozeman based research firm ArtsMarket Inc. ArtsMarket developed a report on the impact of the film industry on Montana's economy and assisted with concepts for a film production incentive. The film office worked extensively to develop an incentive that will increase film production in Montana and it has the approval of the administration. Representative Christopher Harris will be introducing the film incentive bill on behalf of Governor Schweitzer to the 2005 legislature.
- Challenges: The major challenge for 2005 and 2006 will be the passage of the bill, implementing the incentive after signage into law, marketing the program in Los Angeles, and administering the incentive.
- Partnership Opportunities – The film office will work with our partners in tourism as well as the local film community to lobby the legislature for passage of this bill.

A.2.4: *Plan for Promotion of Special Events & Challenges*

Missouri River Country

Vision

- Missouri River Country plans to participate in the grand opening of the Fort Peck Interpretive Center on May 7, 2005. Set up MRC trade show booth, hand out brochures, etc., serve lemonade & cookies.

- Participate in Corps II event when in MRC. Wolf Point, Glasgow, Dodson, in 2005 and Sidney in 2006.
- Participate in the Lewis and Clark at the Confluence event, April 29, 30, and May 1, 2005 at Fort Union, Fort Buford and the Missouri/Yellowstone Intrepretive- Confluence Center. Partner with North Dakota.
- Participate in the Lewis and Clark Festival Days in Nashua on May 6, 7, & 8, 2005.

Partnership Opportunities

- Partner with the Corps of Engineers on the Fort Peck Interpretive Center Grand Opening. We will stay in contact with a Corps of Engineers employee and continue to invite her to our monthly meetings. Advertise and promote the center to travelers.
- Partner with cities and Fort Peck Tribes that are involved with the Corps of Discovery II. Board members will be taking an active role for scheduling and event planning.
- Partner with the Williston, ND CVB, NPS, MT State Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission, USFWS, Williston, ND Chamber of Commerce, State Historical Society of ND, Three Affiliated Tribes, Fort Peck Tribes, Sidney Chamber of Commerce, and ND Tourism on planning the Lewis and Clark at the Confluence Event.
- Partner with the community of Nashua for their Lewis and Clark Festival.

Challenges

- Having a long-term effect on our area. What happens after the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial?

A.3 Create New Tourism & Recreation Products through Packaging

A.3.1: Assess Potential for Local/Regional Packages, & Coordinate Suppliers

Big Sky Convention & Visitors Bureau

Partnership Opportunities

- There is great opportunity for us to partner within Big Sky between suppliers (skiing, snowmobiling, dog sledding, Nordic skiing, whitewater sports, fishing, biking, etc.) but there is certainly also a great opportunity for Big Sky to partner with both Bozeman and West Yellowstone. We have talked vaguely with these two areas about forming a ‘Gallatin Corridor’ that we could market and offer to visitors, and I see the packaging potential as a great opportunity to address this. We need to partner with each other to increase our traffic and visitation, not market ourselves against each other which results in isolated experiences for the visitors and isolated benefits for the areas.

Challenges

- The challenges here are almost the same as the advantages; those of us who see the benefit of partnering must convince those businesses that view partnering as a threat that there is a bigger picture. To convince businesses between Big Sky, Bozeman, and West Yellowstone that there is value in partnering and packaging with businesses, lodging properties and recreational businesses outside of your own city/destination area is a great challenge. The challenge also presents itself when we look at how to convince the supplier to partner within their own city/destination area. Educating people about the possible benefits plays a challenging role as well.

Gold West Country

Vision

- We will be holding a packaging seminar in our region to help educate people on the benefits of package tours.
- We will be upgrading our package deals on the website and making it as easy as possible for members to participate.

Partnership Opportunities

- Partnerships will be created among the package deal participants.
- Potential partnerships are far reaching for people who want to take advantage of this opportunity.

Challenges

- Getting potential participants to the seminar.
- Getting the businesses to participate.
- Keeping the package deals updated.

Montana Promotion Division

Electronic Media

- Conduct small scale testing of package models on visitmt.com to identify how Travel Montana will implement packaging online. Possible solutions include working with industry organizations to provide content for warm season packages, similar to the way we package on wintermt.com.

Yellowstone Country: Hosted Packaging Seminar with Bozeman CVB and The Montana Tribal Alliance (2004)

Challenges

- Informing/educating residents & businesses on the value of packaging
- Creating partnerships & alliances among rural communities
- Identifying potential attractions, events, accommodations, etc as a central hub for packages

Partnership Opportunity

- Many possibilities for partnering to develop packages throughout the region and in all seasons.

A.3.2: Promote Off-Peak Weekend Getaway Packages/Events to “Nearby” Markets

Glacier Country

Partners

- Marketing Committee, Ad agency, PR agency, Call Center, Travel Montana

Challenges

- Getting enough participation from members and getting packaging and then getting enough participation

2004 Actions included

- Spring 2004 E-direct mail, press release, and web page promoting spring and honeymoon packages - New 05 Rack Brochure in Vanns.com shipments & on Washington Ferry System - Canadian Campaign with Travel Montana, Stay & Play, eh packages

Montana Arts Council: In addition to regular cultural tourism information, the Montana Arts Council will provide information in its *State of the Arts* newspaper on the specifics of tourism

industry packaging. MAC encourages arts presenters to participate with event tickets as components to packages.

A.3.3: *Capture More Pass-Through Travelers with Mini-Packages*

Gold West Country

Vision

- We are sending direct email out with sponsors encouraging travelers to come visit Gold West Country. The sponsors will have their website on the email and package deals available.
- We are putting many mini-packages on our website.

Partnership Opportunities

- Potential partnerships include motels, restaurants, museums, attractions and such.

Challenges

- Getting the businesses to coordinate their mini packages.
- Keeping the mini-packages updated.

A.4 Create New “Destinations” with Special Designations & Events

Montana Arts Council: The Montana Arts Council is working to maximize the value of the Hands of Harvest crafts heritage trail as a test model for cultural corridors in Montana.

A.4.1: *Work with MDT & Legislature to Implement Montana Scenic/Historic Byway Program*

Custer Country: Custer Country partnered with TM, Missouri River Country, Yellowstone Country, and Russell Country in the formation of the Montana Dinosaur Trail.

A.4.2: *Use Collaborative Efforts to Create Special Designation Areas*

Missouri River Country

Vision

- Continue to partner with Custer Country, Russell Country, and Yellowstone Country, BLM, FWP, and the dinosaur museums communities to develop the Montana Dinosaur Trail. Create a brochure, internet website and billboard signage.
- Continue to partner with FWP, BLM, Corps of Engineers, and USFWS on a birding trail through Missouri River Country. Create a brochure, FAM trip and Birding Festival.

Partnership Opportunities

- Continue to look for additional partners to help assist with the dinosaur and birding trails. For resources, financial support and advertising.

Challenges

- Having a long-term effect on our area. Keeping the brochure racks supplied with the brochures and the information current.

Montana Arts Council: Montana Arts Council is supporting the development of cultural loops in the state such as Hands of Harvest. MAC is also working with the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity in this arena.

Montana Promotion Division

Tourism Development & Education

- Over the next two years will complete the promotional materials (brochure & website) for the Montana Dinosaur Trail. Will work to develop a community/facility training & networking program to help each of the trail's facilities use this special designation as a community development tool on a local and trailwide basis. Through the MTRI program, will assist community partnerships in expanding the Montana Birding Trail program to other parts of the state. Will continue working with the Hands of Harvest organizations in the development and promotion of the cultural tourism corridors developed in north central Montana as a pilot or mentor project for other parts of the state interested in similar developments.
- Partnership Opportunities: Funding and technical resources will be needed for each of these special designation projects. A number of agencies and organizations are already assisting each of these efforts. The welcome mat is out for any others interested and willing to help these projects move forward.

Russell Country: In 2005, Gayle Fisher and the district ranger from the Rocky Mountain Ranger District will collaborate to write another grant for additional funding to promote the Northern Continental Divide Scenic Loop. We will continue partnerships established to promote the Montana Dinosaur Trail with Travel Montana, Yellowstone Country, Missouri River Country and Custer Country. We plan to do another press trip (March 2005) to showcase our Hands of Harvest Trail.

- The main challenge is the amount of time it takes to create special designation areas such as those mentioned above. Russell Country has one office person and does not contract out phone answering so time is limited.
- Partnerships – Travel Montana, other state agencies, federal government agencies, tourism regions and the Great Falls CVB.

Tourism Advisory Council: TAC will continue to serve as a resource for the Montana Department of Transportation and the Montana Transportation Commission as that agency develops and implements the Montana Scenic/Historic Byway Program.

A.4.3: Seek Opportunities to Host National/International Sports Competitions

West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce

Vision

One of the mainstays of the West Yellowstone winter economy is our Rendezvous Trails system on the Gallatin National Forest. The past two years, WYM has hosted one of the North American Super Tour Nordic Races the last weekend in November. We have done this very successfully and NORAM approached WYM to continue to host the event for the next three years, which we have accepted. Our vision is to continue to host such events and expand where opportunities may lay in both Biathlon and Nordic events.

Partnership Opportunities

- All of our Nordic racing events involve cooperation with the West Yellowstone Ski Education Foundation that conducts all of the timing and results.

- The private sector through Yellowstone Track Systems who provides all of the grooming on a regular basis for the Rendezvous Trails, and the extra grooming required for such events. Doug Edgerton, owner, is a world class track setter.
- The United States Forest Service who provides the necessary permits and, not least, the land on which the Rendezvous Trails exist.

Challenges

- Devoting time and finances to the refurbishing of the biathlon range and targets
- Limited space for competition support needs. WYM already has access to one building adjacent to the start and finish areas though space is very limited. If we are to continue to seek such competitions, we need to build an additional structure that would allow greater storage areas that might in some way be tied into some spectator seating.

A.5 Enhance Montana’s Winter Recreation Products/Services

A.5.1: *Refine Montana’s Niche in the Destination Ski Market & Snowmobile Markets*

West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce

Vision

Return winter visitation levels to the pre snowmobile controversy levels (which is the level the Park Service supports). To assist in accomplishing this, WYM currently has a project underway to survey snowcoach visitors to Yellowstone from West Yellowstone. In future years we will use the information gleaned to establish more effective marketing strategies for this winter niche. As well, we will seek to develop a similar survey to find out more information about snowmobile visitors under the new rules.

Partnership Opportunities

- The private sector is already participating to ensure that the surveys are completed.
- All of the information will be provided to the private sector for them to use in their own marketing strategies.
- The Park Service will be provided with the information as well to see where they may be able to partner with us. An example would be: The Park Service knows that they will be making a presentation to the Doe Group who has been shown to be highly likely to visit Yellowstone by snowcoach. The Park Service reminds the group that Yellowstone is open in the winter.

Challenges

- Acquiring an adequate sample within one season.
- Communicating the information to both the private and public sector in a meaningful manner.
- Developing effective marketing strategies.

Yellowstone Country: Yellowstone Country continues to promote the four premier ski destinations, as well as the “Quiet Side of Winter” activities (2005-2008)

Challenges:

- Limited promotional budget for reaching all desired target markets effectively

A.5.2: *Package Skiing & Snowmobiling with Other Activities*

Yellowstone Country: Yellowstone Country continues efforts to develop packaging for all vertical markets (2003-2008)

Challenges

- Informing/educating residents & businesses on the value of packaging
- Creating partnerships & alliances among rural communities
- Identifying potential attractions, events, accommodations, etc as a central hub for packages

Partnership Opportunity

- Many possibilities for partnering to develop packages throughout the region and in all seasons.

A.5.3: *Expand “Alternative” Winter Activities*

Montana Arts Council: The Montana Arts Council is continuing its work to encourage tourism partners to increase the profile of cultural offerings in all its promotional material. MAC is also encouraging the arts sector to work with the various promotional offerings and structures of the tourism partners. This is a very important way to offer alternative activities that are not recreation based.

Yellowstone Country: See above comments, challenges, and partnership opportunities

A.6 Attract More Meetings & Conventions to Montana

**A.6.1: *Refine Montana’s Niche and “Brand” in the Meeting/Convention Market;
Determine Feasibility of Enhanced Meeting & Convention Facilities***

Glacier Country

Partners

- Meeting Hotels, CVBs, Travel Montana

Challenges

- Funding for trade shows & events in big cities like Washington D.C. – getting hotels to follow up on leads from trade shows and/or report if they have booked anything as a result of the trade shows

2004 Actions included

- Email broadcast of Golf press release prior to Linda's attendance at affordable meetings national & IT & ME trade shows in September 2004

A.6.2: *Conduct Training on the Needs & Trends of Meeting/Convention Markets*

A.6.3: *Use Local Historical/Cultural Attractions to Enhance Venue Offerings*

Montana Arts Council: The Montana Arts Council is continuing its work to encourage tourism partners to increase the profile of cultural offerings in all its promotional material. MAC is also encouraging the arts sector to work with the various promotional offerings and structures of the tourism partners. This is a very important way to highlight alternative activities that are not recreation based.

A.7 Enhance System of Tracking, Analysis & Information Dissemination about Tourism Trends, & Implications for Stakeholders

A.7.1: *Continue Strategic Research about Resident & Nonresident Travelers*

Montana Arts Council: Montana Arts Council worked with TAC and ITRR directly to include more survey questions related to cultural tourism behavior and activities. Additions and clarifications were implemented for the 2005 non-resident survey. MAC is researching with ITRR the potential of a test group or focus group developed from the participants in Montana's Cultural Treasures 2004 guide to statewide art galleries and cultural organizations.

Tourism Advisory Council: Over the next two years, TAC's Research Committee will be looking at ways to increase the user-friendliness of the various websites containing research information and studies and request that the Department of Revenue track room nights and camper nights as part of their lodging tax collection system.

A.7.2: *Regularly Measure Montanans' Opinions about Tourism & Recreation*

A.7.3: *Conduct Regular Conversion Research to Measure Results of Marketing Efforts*

Bozeman Convention & Visitors Bureau

Vision

- The Bozeman CVB is currently in the process of an on-line survey to gather information about potential visitors. The on-line survey will as its subjects individuals that are planning a trip to Bozeman using the website to conduct their research. The information will allow Bozeman oh gather baseline data regarding potential target markets. This research will allow us to conduct a conversion study in 2006 looking for information about if those potential visitors actually came to Bozeman to visit.

Partnership Opportunities

- In this particular case, we will not partner with any other organization to carry out the study. Our hope is to share the information with ITRR, Travel Montana and other regions and CVB's that may want to use the data or do a similar study.

Challenges

- Collecting enough information that is useful. It has been requested on several occasions that Travel Montana do more work in the field of conversion studies. The problem seems to be having the funds to do them.

A.7.4: *Establish a Central "Clearinghouse" for Data Collection, Analysis & Reporting*

Montana Arts Council: Montana Arts Council is working with Lively Times and Montana Promotions Division to establish the best possible statewide calendar of cultural events and activities online through Travel Montana's website and other materials.

A.7.5: *Create a Statewide "Baseline" Database of Tourism & Recreation Assets*

A.7.6: *Enhance Data-Gathering Systems at Attractions & VICs*

A.7.7: *Upgrade Lodging Tax Reporting Systems at Montana Department of Revenue*

A.7.8: *Coordinate with the Private Sector for Enhanced Tracking/Reporting*

Montana Promotion Division

Industry & Operations

- Provide visitation figures on Montana Promotion Division's intranet site. Collect visitation figures at more locations year round instead of just the May through September time period.

A.8 Create a Connected System to Share Information & Resources

A.8.1: *Create a Tourism & Recreation Listserv to Share Information*

A.8.2: *Create a Database of Tourism/Recreation Technical & Funding Resources*

A.8.3: *Share Information about State/Regional Advertising Plans to Facilitate Coordination*

A.8.4: *Enhance Sharing of Tourism & Recreation Photo Libraries*

B. MANAGING THE USE OF ASSETS

B.1 Seek Balance Between Asset Protection & Visitor/Business Needs

Bureau of Land Management: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) encourages and supports partnerships with the tourism industry promoting the Tread Lightly! And Leave No Trace programs. In addition, the BLM promotes special outreach projects like Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration: 2003-2006, National Public Lands Day, Fishing Week, National Trails Day and local community events. The protection of resources and visitor safety are met by collaborative/cooperative law enforcement agreements with other federal, state and local governmental agencies. The use of volunteers, campground hosts and contracted firms also assists in managing visitor and business needs, regulatory compliance and resource protection.

Montana Historical Society

- MHS and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) work with communities through the Certified Local Government (CLG) program to coordinate and encourage local preservation efforts.
- SHPO works with local groups to survey and inventory community resources and nominate districts and individual properties to the National Register
- MHS has requested increased resources to enhance security and asset protection while providing agency services to all visitors

Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI): Montana is rich in resources upon which our residents and visitors base their recreational activities. MTRI will address recreation opportunities and asset protection through its member agencies' land-use planning processes and statutorily required planning efforts.

National Park Service: The National Park Service is proud to be the stewards of eight National Park sites in Montana that bring millions of visitors into the state annually. We are honored to be a key player in commemorating the bicentennial of the Lewis & Clark Corps of Discovery. We take pride in partnering with and assisting communities care for their natural and cultural heritage through our Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Teams, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the National Heritage Areas Program. We recognize that many gateway communities have vibrant tourism economies related to Montana's National Park sites and we strive to be responsive to their needs in our daily management choices. National Park Service (NPS) policies require us to manage public use in National Parks so as not to impair the resources under our care. Research and scientific study to measure impacts is coordinated with other federal, state and local partners, and is used to guide management actions that protect park resources. We will keep working to identify and understand impacts to sensitive resources so that we may work with local communities and park partners to continue to allow the public as full and as complete access as is reasonable to do so.

We are also charged with improving the conditions of natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources such as buildings, battlefields, landscapes, collections, and natural environments. We use a national planning and reporting system, the Government Performance and Results Act to plan and track our efforts. Public use is measured against the goals of the Act and encouraged

where resource impacts are minimal or can be mitigated. The removal of exotic plants and animals, historic restorations and working with the state and EPA to clean up rivers and lands within NPS jurisdictions are all examples of work we do that improves park resources and contributes to good visitor experiences. These goals are documented in the NPS 2005-2008 Strategic Plan, which is currently being updated.

B.1.1: Compile an Inventory/Evaluation of Natural/Historic/Cultural Assets & Facilities

Gold West Country

Vision

- Gold West Country is forming a core group to begin working on this inventory and where we want to go with this. We have a base and would like to expand on what we have.

Partnership Opportunities

- This list is far reaching from individuals to organizations to ranchers and to anything that could possibly be pulled into this great opportunity.

Challenges

- Organizing the meetings and the core group.
- Pulling in potential partners.
- Setting up a guideline and flowchart for the progression of the group.
- Figuring out how to fund the setup of this project.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Continue to manage each national wildlife refuge in Montana in accordance with an approved Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP), which when implemented, will include an inventory of refuge assets; will achieve refuge purposes; will help fulfill the Refuge System mission; will maintain, and where appropriate, restore the ecological integrity of each refuge; will help achieve the goals of the National Wilderness Preservation System; and will meet other mandates. We will prepare refuge plans that, above all else, ensure that wildlife comes first. Opportunities to participate in the CCP process are available to federal, state, and local agencies, tribal governments, conservation organizations, adjacent landowners and public.

B.1.2: Select Management Options that Emphasize Balanced Resident & Nonresident Use

B.1.3: Develop Systems of Allocated Use in Sensitive Areas

B.1.4: Evaluate Licensing for All Guided Recreation Activities that Involve Safety Risk

B.1.5: Address Motorized vs. Non-Motorized Recreation User Conflicts

B.1.6: *Address Invasive Species Problems through Partnerships & Educational Programs*

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Continue agency involvement in partnership efforts to address invasive species problems including the Statewide Noxious Weed Awareness and Education Campaign.

B.1.7: *Encourage Appropriate Use of Land Conservancy Programs*

B.2: Address Access Issues on Public & Private Lands & Waters

B.2.1: *Support Implementation of Strategies to Improve Access to Public Lands & Waters*

Missouri River Country

Vision

- Partner with the Fort Peck Tribes, BLM and FWP to develop more accessible boat ramps. Meet with these entities to express the need for access to the Missouri River.

Partnership Opportunities

- Look for assistance in developing river access.

Challenges

- Getting all entities involved to agree on the conditions involved with establishing boat ramps. Land owner permission.

B.2.2: *Expand the Block Management Program for Access to Private Lands*

B.2.3: *Use Special Groups to Facilitate Discussion of Access to Public/Private Lands & Waters*

B.3 Develop an Enhanced Transportation System in Montana

Bureau of Land Management: BLM has initiated a new National Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Management Strategy and National Mountain Bike Strategy for improving the way the road and trail systems are managed on public lands. These new strategies integrate the BLM's recreation, engineering and maintenance programs, commercial users, and multi-resource programs. This is being accomplished by BLM providing consistent public access signing and information including websites and all print media. The BLM, United States Forest Service (USFS) and Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) meet twice per year to coordinate the Interagency OHV Team and collaborate on travel management issues and monitor the effectiveness of the joint OHV Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Montana Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission: Will continue to work with appropriate land management agencies, private sector groups and Tribal entities to enhance the Lewis & Clark Trail experience in Montana for residents and non-residents beyond 2006 by encouraging the development of improved infrastructure (i.e. hiking trails), and trail interpretation (i.e. signage and interpretive programs)

Montana Historical Society

- Seek funding for a new and better MHS facility with adequate parking, highway access and floor space to improve visitor experiences and the interpretation of Montana's cultural heritage
- Work with MDT to provide more and better interpretive services along Montana corridors by representation on map, rest area, and signage committees.

Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI): MTRI will monitor its agencies' travel management operations and maintenance programs to ensure sustainability and enhanced recreation opportunities.

National Park Service: National Parks in Montana have a significant history with Burlington Northern Railroad, (Great Northern) particularly Glacier National Park. In several locations across the country, historic and active railroad routes are in partnership with the National Park Service to provide interpretation on trains. Glacier has effectively engaged the railroads to provide this service. Along with train experiences, the National Park Service offers assistance to communities and partners seeking to provide interpretation through the development of themed, heritage trails. A relatively new tourism model, heritage/arts/cultural tourism is best supported by developing routes that connect a number of related sites in a visitor friendly loop. Guidebooks and waysides supplement the experience and provide enriching insights into perhaps lesser-known but equally fascinating aspects of a region's history. These kinds of tours typically use state scenic routes and blue highways. We support efforts by communities across the state to coordinate and develop heritage trails.

Improving road networks through and around national park areas is a considerable activity that MTDOT and the parks attack aggressively annually to improve access to and travel within the parks for both neighbors and visitors. Regional and local trail systems developing for bird watching and nature studies have recently included NPS lands. The National Park Service will support and promote all these forms of transportation and interpretation enhancement activities.

B.3.1: Advance Implementation of Montana's Rest Area Strategy

B.3.2: Continue to Improve Roads & Bridges; Address Maintenance Backlog

B.3.3: Work with Air Carriers/Airports to Identify Needs & Enhance Air Service

Big Sky Convention & Visitors Bureau***Partnership Opportunities***

- This gives us an opportunity to partner and address one of our biggest challenges; accessibility. Big Sky will always be challenged by its accessibility as a resort destination area, and we are working towards better relationships with our transportation sectors that service our area. The Big Sky Resort has done a great job of forming relationships with the airlines that fly to Bozeman, and has established a good base for future partnership opportunities. If we can address our air service issues through partnering with the Air Carriers, we can work on overcoming one of our biggest identified challenges. This would be an area as well that might lend itself to a relationship between the Big Sky and Bozeman Chambers of Commerce in working for better air service collectively for the business sector of our communities.

Challenges

- Good relationships within the air service industry do not mean that we can increase our service. Although we can prove that people are using the air service to get to Big Sky, many times we cannot provide enough ridership to show that increased flights are necessary. We have a challenge of getting direct air service without providing a money-backed guarantee that we will fill the seats. There is a challenge as well of having the support and backing of Bozeman and West Yellowstone in our efforts to build better relationships and increase air service; many businesses in those areas feel that they do not wish to help increase air service that will take people out of Bozeman and straight to Big Sky.

Missouri River Country

Vision

- Missouri River Country will send out letters of support to government agencies to keep air service in our area.
- We will plan to allocate funds in next years Marketing Plan to supply Airports, Port of Entries, and Amtrak Stations with brochure racks with Missouri River Country information on them.

Partnership Opportunities

- Look for additional partners to participate in the support to keep transportation service in Missouri River Country.
- Partner with Big Sky Airlines and Amtrak to support our efforts to supply Missouri River Country information to travelers.

Challenges

- Keeping transportation service in our area. Lack of funding and low occupancy could limit the service.

Tourism Advisory Council: Over the next two years, TAC will serve as a resource for the Montana Department of Transportation's Air Service Study effort.

B.3.4: Advocate for Passenger Rail Service

B.3.5: Work with Car Rental Agencies to Identify Needs & Enhance Services

B.3.6: Identify Opportunities for Transit/Shuttle Transportation at Major Destinations

B.3.7: Enhance Montana's Trail System

Missouri River Country

Vision

- Missouri River Country is working on creating a dinosaur trail, and birding trail.
- Missouri River Country plans to investigate opportunities to create nature trails in communities in Missouri River Country. We will invite trail leaders to our meetings to learn more about creating trails.

Partnership Opportunities

- Look for partners to help create these trails. Local communities and nature trail experts.

Challenges

- Finding partners that are willing to contribute to the development of trails. Keeping the trails maintained and pollution free.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

- Continue active involvement in efforts to establish a statewide Birding and Nature Trail. Promote Montana national wildlife refuges as gateways and central information points for segments of the Trail.
- Assist in planning and participate in Lewis and Clark Bicentennial commemorative events along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail.
- Continue developing accessible nature trails and auto tour routes and improving existing trails and auto tour routes on national wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries in Montana.

B.4 Create a Comprehensive & Interactive “System” of Visitor Information & Interpretation

Bureau of Land Management: The BLM is promoting President Bush’s Healthier US and E-Gov Recreation One-Stop Initiatives that will offer easy access and a means of centralized shopping to the public for campgrounds, cabins, parks, and tours of national sites. These initiatives are a national and multi agency strategy to improve visitor service satisfaction and informational needs. The Fee Demonstration Project, the Recreation One-Stop Service and Volunteer.gov websites and partnering with non-profit cooperative associations are means to enhancing visitor services and informational needs nationally.

Montana Historical Society

- Continue to provide public exhibits and programs that enhance visitor experience including Lewis and Clark, Neither Empty nor Unknown (2005), Painting the Corps (2005), Montana Quilts (2006)
- MHS provides interpretive signs for National Register properties and assistance with Lewis and Clark interpretive signage

Montana Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission

- Coordinate with Travel Montana to further develop on-line "Lewis & Clark Corridors" to assist visitors in finding events and attractions by date and location
- Offer timely updates to Montana's media for events and developing attractions
- Partner with Travel Montana for the distribution of event brochures and newspaper inserts featuring Lewis & Clark events to chambers of commerce and visitor information centers
- Partner with the Department of Transportation for the continued erection of Lewis & Clark signage in highway rest areas
- Work with MTRI agencies and community-based Regional Bicentennial Commissions to further the implementation of Montana's new Lewis & Clark Interpretive Sign Strategy
- Sponsored a "Lewis & Clark Performing Arts Showcase" to facilitate the delivery of educational and entertaining programs; resulting database will be periodically updated and be available in print and on-line

Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI): MTRI agencies will improve the quality of visitor experiences through coordinated programs of enhanced interpretation and education.

National Park Service: Visitor Centers are needed at some national park sites in Montana to provide information, provide indoor group meeting locations, and create the opportunity for increasing public communication so that visitors can better make the connection between the country's natural and cultural history and their immediate lives. In addition, the Park Service works closely with other agencies and gateway communities to provide a presence in other information centers that assists travelers in decision making related to Montanan national parks and the National Park Service. The Service sees a broader need for community centers and joins with the State to create reference centers that are visitor friendly, clean and welcoming that provide accurate and helpful information.

B.4.1: Enhance State Rest Areas & VICs with Montana Highlights

B.4.2: Educate Visitors about Ethics and Responsibilities on Public & Private Lands

Missouri River Country

Vision

- Missouri River Country will incorporate in our new travel guide and birding and dinosaur trail brochures how visitors should conduct themselves on private lands.

Partnership Opportunities

- Look for partners who are willing to promote and teach the proper conduct for visitors on private lands.

Challenges

- Visitors respecting private lands.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

- Continue distributing MTRI stewardship brochure “*Montana’s Living Treasure – Caring for the lands along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail*” at national wildlife refuges along the Trail.
- Continue to produce new and update existing brochures for visitors to national wildlife refuges in Montana to help them understand and appreciate their public land resources.
- Continue producing interpretive signage that educates visitors about recreation opportunities available on national wildlife refuges as well as the visitor’s role in protecting the resources.
- Distribute new brochure, “Wildlife of the Lewis and Clark Expedition – A Bicentennial Journal” at events commemorating the Bicentennial.
- Complete new exhibit, “Wildlife of the Lewis and Clark Expedition – Then and now” and display it at events commemorating the Bicentennial.

B.4.3: *Complete Implementation of Statewide Lewis & Clark Interpretive Sign Strategy*

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Support implementation of the *Statewide Lewis & Clark Interpretive Sign Strategy* at the Blackfoot Waterfowl Production Area along Highway 200 in the Blackfoot River valley.

B.4.4: *Provide Professionally Researched Interpretive Programs & Facilities for Visitors*

***West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce
Vision***

Partner with the National Park Service on the construction of a contact station at the West entrance. When WYM learned of the Park Service's plan to reconstruct the West Entrance and to build a contact station, we approached the Park to consider making the contact station an addition to the existing Visitors Center. The plan is now well underway. This expansion will mean, among other things:

- Greater interpretive opportunities for the Town and the Historic District here, possibly Virginia and Nevada Cities, the Park Service and the Forest Service.
- Provide the ability to have contact with a greater number of visitors as they enter and leave the Park.

Partnership Opportunities

- The Town of West Yellowstone
- The United States Forest Service, Gallatin, Targhee and Beaverhead Forests.
- Yellowstone National Park
- The Yellowstone Historic District in West Yellowstone.
- Private Sector to assist with funding parts of the construction and funding some of the interpretive displays.

Challenges

- Meeting the myriad of rules and regulations for such a project.
- Sufficient funding to allow for enough restroom capacity.
- Sufficient funding to allow for quality interpretive displays.

B.5 Improve Statewide System of Highway Signs

B.5.1: *Develop/Implement Sign Guidelines for Services, Attractions & Businesses*

B.5.2: *Encourage Statewide Adoption of Visitor-Friendly Symbol Signs*

B.5.3: *Address Appropriate Use/Placement of Billboards While Maintaining Landscapes*

B.6 Assist Communities to Enhance Facilities/Services for Tourism Development while Respecting Community Values, Heritage & Character

B.6.1: Continue and Enhance Community Tourism Assessment (CTAP) & Tourism Infrastructure Improvement (TIIP) Programs

Custer Country: Custer Country Executive Director participated in the CTAP program in Wibaux, including follow-up letters to help the community secure grant money from TM and other sources.

B.6.2: Encourage Review of City/County/Tribal Infrastructure & Public Services

B.6.3: Enhance Heritage/Cultural Facilities & Attractions to Meet Visitor Needs

B.6.4: Encourage Community Participation in the National Main Street Program

B.6.5: Encourage Communities to Use Strategic Planning & Development Tools

Custer Country: At each meeting where the MIKA presentation has been given, the communities have been informed about, and encouraged to participate in the CTAP program, Co-Op Grants program, and other TM and Custer Country assistance programs

C. CREATING TEAMS

C.1 Identify Opportunities to Link Agriculture with Tourism

C.1.1: *Create Mechanisms for Tourism Businesses to Use Montana Agricultural Products*

C.1.2: *Enhance Existing Programs with Focus on Tourist Markets*

C.1.3: *Develop Cooperative Marketing Campaigns between Agriculture & Tourism*

C.1.4: *Educate Visitors about Montana Agriculture & Ranching*

Bozeman Convention & Visitors Bureau

Vision

- The Bozeman CVB will continue to partner with the agriculture community to work on projects that link agriculture and tourism. This includes finishing the agri-tour map and looking for ways to improve it.

Partnership Opportunities

- Continue to look for addition partners in the ag community to participate in cooperative projects.

Challenges

Partnering with the ag community presents several challenges:

- Communication: Finding effective ways to communicate with farmers/ranchers about various opportunities. It would be helpful to know more avenues (Agricultural newsletters, opportunities that extension services may offer etc.) to get the word out about what we are trying to do.
- Schedules: Getting everyone together in one place to share ideas seems nearly impossible. It seems like farmers/ranchers do not like to come to town unless they have to and for me to drive to every ranch/farm in the area would take a tremendous amount of time.

Russell Country: We plan to partner and work with Teton and Pondera County youth groups and MSU's County Extension Agents to implement a crop signage program covering two counties in Russell Country. In addition to the name of the crop (i.e. wheat, lentils, malting barley) we hope to be able to do a sign that shows one use for the crop (i.e. bread). We will work to expand our Hands of Harvest Trail east and south. Continue working with Undaunted Stewardship and the Montana Stockgrowers to promote their new interpretive areas in Russell Country.

- The challenge to developing non-traditional partnerships is time.
- Partnerships – county extension agents and MSU extension, agriculture producer organizations, Hands of Harvest organization, Travel Montana, other state and county agencies.

C.2 Create Partnerships to Address Asset Management Needs

Bureau of Land Management: BLM will expand and pursue additional partnerships in order to provide funding and resource management support of public lands. The Montana BLM has an

active partnership with Montana's FWP supporting trail and OHV grants (TEA-21) and projects. Resource Advisory Councils (RAC) volunteers assist BLM with management plans, working with various local communities Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Administration, recreational and sport clubs, and other federal agencies.

Montana Historical Society

- MHS works with the Montana History Foundation to identify corporate sponsorships, memberships and private donors
- Maintains the Friends of the Society, a vital volunteer organization within MHS
- Continue to seek opportunities to partner with other state and local agencies, community groups, civic organizations and tribal representatives, for example, who provide assistance in managing and interpreting cultural collections

Montana Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Commission: Continue to work within MTRI structure to create and foster various interagency partnerships (i.e. develop and assist in implementation of Interpretive Sign Strategy; partner with MDT for the placement of Gateway Interpretive Signs at rest areas; facilitate supportive partnerships for hosting of Corps II in 18 Montana communities, etc.)

Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI): MTRI will encourage and sustain collaborative partnerships through its agencies' community liaisons, volunteer opportunities and public outreach and awareness events.

National Park Service: The Service maintains an enthusiasm for increasing both the quality and quantity of partnerships that preserve resources and enhance visitor service, adding meaning and value to on site experiences. State organizations such as the Department of Transportation, the Historical Society, the Department of Commerce and the Arts Council are primary partners in identifying opportunities for shared projects of mutual benefit. We will continue to work collaboratively on state commissions, advisory boards and in consultation with state organizations to assure maximum success in achieving these goals.

In its nearly ninety years, the National Park Service has been built on partnerships with tourism and transportation industries and the academic and science communities. Tribal Governments have engaged with National Park Service initiatives in Montana for decades, and have served as preeminent experts, participants and leaders in shaping management decisions. Montanan's American Indian Tribes exemplify leadership in cultivating effective inter-cultural relationships that honor the love of the land by its many peoples. We relish the opportunity to deepen proven relationships in the tourism realm and welcome the chance to engage with the Montana Tribal Tourism Association, as appropriate.

In addition, every Montanan community affected by, adjacent to or interested in the national parks is a member of a network of forces working to enhance the quality of life for Montanans by preserving the places and stories they cherish. We honor the inherent good sense of these connections and work diligently to encourage the parks and communities to support each other.

C.2.1: *Identify Opportunities for Partnerships & Funding to Address Asset Needs*

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Evaluate partnership potential on a project-by-project basis. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program activities have resulted in tremendous on-the-ground habitat restoration and enhancement accomplishments.

C.2.2: *Evaluate Agency Regulations & Policies to Determine Differences in Priorities/Programs*

C.2.3: *Encourage Citizens to Volunteer for Asset Maintenance Projects*

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

- Continue to recruit volunteers to assist with visitor education/interpretive programs and asset maintenance on national wildlife refuges in Montana.
- Continue to develop Friends Groups to serve as advocates for individual national wildlife refuges in Montana.

C.3 Increase Awareness & Utilization of Business Assistance Programs among Tourism & Recreation Businesses

C.3.1: *Provide Information about Business Assistance to Tourism & Recreation Businesses*

***Big Sky Convention & Visitors Bureau
Partnership Opportunities***

- This gives us the opportunity to work with business development organizations that can help us educate existing businesses and encourage additional business to move into Big Sky to help sustain our community and our visitors. These partnerships help us work more closely with organizations outside of our community, which gives us a greater perspective and a different approach to making our business climate successful.

Challenges

- Challenges that face us in this area are not necessarily about attaining the information but are more about how to use this information and fit it to Big Sky's unique seasonal business climate. Often the information we find or are given is more helpful to areas that do not have the challenge of such a strong seasonal business.

Montana Arts Council: Montana Arts Council is providing business assistance to its cultural organizations for capacity building (therefore more services to offer to tourists) through its Art of Leadership program.

C.3.2: *Offer Entrepreneurship & Management Training for Tourism & Recreation Businesses*

Montana Arts Council: Same comment as above regarding cultural institutions.

C.3.3: *Address Workforce Issues & Training Programs*

West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce***Vision***

Enhance word-of-mouth advertising of West Yellowstone as a great destination. WYM knows that word-of-mouth is the best of all advertising. To enhance the success of this form of advertising WYM has developed an employee training program that has several aspects to it.

- Montana Superhost Training
- Town familiarization tours for employees
- Regional familiarization tours that include the Earthquake Lake Visitors Center and Nevada and Virginia Cities.
- Visiting private sector businesses to bring information to their staffs

Partnership Opportunities

- Montana Superhost Program
- Private Sector businesses to send and fund employees, to invite our staff to their place of business and provide some of the services needed for the familiarization tours.
- U. S. Forest Service for presentation at the Earthquake Visitors Center and for discussion on available services / regulations on the Gallatin Forest.
- Yellowstone Park Staff for presentation on major features, road constructions issues, care around animals and so forth.

Challenges

- To develop an effective means that encourages employers to participate thus lending credibility to the program
- To have greater numbers of employee participation
- To find further donated services

C.3.4: Encourage Financial Lending to Provide Capital for Tourism & Recreation Businesses**C.4 Identify Business Opportunities to Serve Visitors on Public Lands*****C.4.1: Identify Opportunities for New or Enhanced Tourism/Recreation Services******C.4.2: Discuss Ways to Simplify Regulations & Permitting Processes While Protecting Assets******C.4.3: Investigate Contracting of Maintenance Operations to Private Businesses*****C.5 Enhance Montana's "Edu-Structure" to Support Tourism*****C.5.1: Expand Education Programs for Tourism & Recreation Careers***

Tourism Advisory Council: Over the next two years, TAC members will work with Travel Montana, the state's university and K-12 education systems, Montana Superhost, and other educational organizations to expand the offering of educational programs available for tourism and recreation careers. This TAC effort will also look at development of a Speakers Bureau, bringing TIA educational seminars to Montana, increasing business awareness of tourism and coordination of existing programs.

C.5.2: *Develop a Staff Training Program for VICs*

Yellowstone Country

- Yellowstone Country provides the thirteen regional Chambers YC 301 training seminar annually to help inform & educate Visitor Information Center staff about the community, region and state. (2003-2008)
- Working with regional Chambers to develop job descriptions, staff guidelines, etc with objective of staffing the VICs with knowledgeable, trained personnel (2005)

Challenges

- Providing and implementing quality information and education resources that are utilized effectively.

C.5.3: *Provide Regional Familiarization Tours for State/Regional/Tribal/Local Tourism Staff*

C.5.4: *Include Educational Presentations at Tourism & Recreation Meetings & Events*

Montana Arts Council: Montana Arts Council made presentations on its programs and possible collaborations to all tourism countries, TAC meetings and MACE (MT Assoc of Chamber Execs) meetings.

C.5.5: *Work with MSU to Create "Tourism Extension Agents" in Each Tourism Region*

C.6 Build Funding Partnerships to Leverage Existing Dollars

C.6.1: *Encourage Strategic Partnerships for Cooperative Project Funding*

Russell Country: Continue partnerships with Forest Service district ranger offices, state BLM offices, Fish, Wildlife & Parks (state level, regional level and park manager level), and National Park Service (Bear Paw Battlefield). Continue our successful cooperative marketing program for tourism marketing. This also means we will need to continue education about co-op marketing to chambers of commerce and other promotional groups in Russell Country.

- One challenge is different fiscal year structures; another is the amount of regulations that must be followed for our cooperative marketing projects.
- Partnerships – USDA Forest Service, BLM, FWP, NPS, other tourism regions, Travel Montana, non-profit tourism organizations.

C.6.2: *Identify Opportunities to Pool Public & Private Marketing Dollars*

Bozeman Convention & Visitors Bureau

Vision

- The Bozeman CVB will continue to building funding partnerships, as it is the key to the success of this industry. One of the criteria, against which all of our projects submitted to the TAC for review, is based on whether or not the project will stand on its own merit. A project is more likely to be granted, if there are other funding partners involved in the project.

Partnership Opportunities

- One of the primary reasons people come to this area is for the outdoor recreation. I would welcome any opportunity to partner on viable projects with any of our federal partners (BLM, FWP, Forrest Service, National Park Service). Here are two examples:
 1. Work with FWP, BLM or the Gallatin National Forrest on better hiking/trail maps in the area.
 2. Work with the Gallatin National Forrest on a project to educate visitors about proper river etiquette (garbage, latrines etc) on the Gallatin River.

Challenges

- When working with funding partners, it is often difficult to explain the rules and regulations under which we operate. Why are some projects viable and some are not?

C.7 Develop Additional Funding Sources for Tourism & Recreation

Bureau of Land Management: The BLM is actively involved in promoting recreational activities on public lands in Montana. This in turn assists Montana's tourism industry and local communities. BLM has supported projects and the funding of 1 million dollars for the Undaunted Stewardship Program, which supports private individuals with recreational based historic sites in 2004 and 2005. BLM through its Challenge Cost Share program will fund several partnerships in 2005:

Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Signature Events for 2005 and 2006
 Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument
 Travel planning and management in the Butte Field Office
 A river ranger for the Blackfoot River
 Partnership with the State of Montana to manage permits on the Blackfoot River
 Montana Continental Divide Trail work in the Dillon Field Office

Montana Historical Society

- Encourage tourism through billboards along the highway created in partnership with local government, businesses and community groups.
- Work with MTRI to create a visitor passport
- Evaluate user fees for our museum visitors

Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative (MTRI): MTRI will continue to work within the guidelines of its Memorandum of Understanding to plan and fund mutually beneficial tourism and recreation projects that serve the needs of residents and visitors, both national and international.

National Park Service: Funding sources specifically for tourism and the promotion of recreation in Montana will be pursued through the new NPS Office of Tourism in Washington, DC, as well as working with the National Park Service's foremost fund-raising partner, the National Park Foundation (NPF), to engage the corporate sector. We will invite NPF to extend its outreach for tourism support by suggesting new programs, broadening existing programs to include tourism promotion goals and encouraging a focus on Montana.

C.7.1: *Consider Selective &/or Local Option Taxes on Goods & Services Used by Tourists*

C.7.2: *Evaluate Expansion of User Fees for Public Facility Recreation*

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Continue operation of fee demo program at the National Bison Range and explore potential for fee demo program at other refuges in Montana.

C.7.3: *Encourage Attractions to Generate more Revenue from Visitors*

C.7.4: *Develop Local/Regional Revenue-Sharing Visitor Packages*

C.7.5: *Create a “Montana Visitor Passport” Program, with a Portion of Proceeds from Passport Sales used to Support Local/Regional Tourism Efforts*

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service: Participate in efforts to develop a “Montana Visitor Passport” Program

C.7.6: *Seek Additional Revenue for the Block Management Program*

C.8 Develop Partnerships to Facilitate Implementation of Strategic Plan

C.8.1: *Conduct Workshops in Each Region to Discuss Plan Implementation*

C.8.2: *Conduct Training for Region/Convention & Visitors Bureau Boards of Directors & Members*

C.8.3: *Obtain Funding to Enhance Regional Tourism Organizations*

C.8.4: *Coordinate Strategic Plan Implementation & Monitoring through Dept. of Commerce*

C.8.5: *Form an Implementation Team of Private/Public/Tribal/Nonprofit Representatives*

C.8.6: *Coordinate Implementation with Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity*

Montana Arts Council: MAC is working with the Governor’s office of OEO on the development of cultural corridors and cultural tourism projects like the Artists Studio Tour in Park County, Hands of Harvest crafts heritage trail in north central Montana and Butte’s Silver Bow Arts Foundation’s summer programs.

C.8.7: *Develop a User-Friendly System of Annual Reporting on Status of Strategic Plan*

Montana Tourism & Recreation Accomplishments

Big Sky Convention & Visitors Bureau

- Continue to coordinate efforts between public and private sectors to get most effective advertising and publicity coverage for Big Sky; create balance and partnerships between Big Sky Chamber/CVB, Big Sky Lodging Group, Moonlight Basin, Big Sky Resort
- Launched successful advertising campaign to promote direct flights into Bozeman/Big Sky from Los Angeles (partnered with Big Sky Resort) – addressed our challenge of accessibility
- Developed Strategic Plan for Big Sky which addresses most challenging areas for our community as we grow; Extensive work in Growth & Development, Business Development, Community & Infrastructure, Housing (much of the work centers around educating the community and the businesses as to the state of affairs and the need for stronger partnerships/education
- Continue working on Publicity campaign which focuses on niche markets/special events/shoulder season attractions in Big Sky Chamber of Commerce
- Attended ITME conference in Chicago to address meetings/convention market; educate meeting planners about opportunities for smaller meetings/incentive travel (those wishing for intimacy of location that Big Sky Resort cannot offer) and created mailing piece to use as follow up to leads supplied by Travel Montana in this market
- Continue to support Big Sky Resort/Moonlight Basin in their efforts to attract national ski/snowboard competitions, help with advertising
- Attended packaging workshop in Bozeman to learn how to foster relationships between businesses/recreation outfitters that would initiate selling/promoting of packages to area

Glacier Country

- Created a comprehensive color-coded chart to keep track of projects, challenges, and accomplishments that can be shared with other stakeholders.
- Continue to work on public/private partnerships to stretch dollars and promote Glacier Country to an ever-increasing audience. This past year this included several very successful online campaigns that generated over 25,000 requests for travel guides and created at least 1 million impressions.
- The Executive Director attended many trade shows with public/private cooperation to target meetings and conventions, tour operators, the international market, and general consumers.
- Glacier Country continues to seek packages from members to advertise through public relations and the website. The packages continue to be the second most looked at page on our website, however getting packages submitted from our members continues to be one of our biggest challenges.
- Glacier Country has worked with several special interest groups to create new cultural tourism interests such as the Quilt Show in Eureka in August 2005, as well as with groups looking to create scenic loop drives and birding trails. These efforts will continue to reap rewards by encouraging the visitor to stay longer and visit some of our smaller communities.
- Glacier Country also created a new five-panel brochure that targets both summer and winter visitors to the region and added new pages to the travel guide that focus on winter.

We feel that by adding these important winter elements we will be able to capture more winter visitors to the area. We also promoted the winter season with our first ever winter sweepstakes through direct mail and e-direct mail.

Gold West Country

A.2.2 Encourage cross promotion between tourism partners and sectors.

- We have worked with Travel Montana on partnerships with print advertising.
- We have worked with Russell County on Travel Shows.
- We have included the private sector on email sponsor advertisements.

A.7.3 Conduct regular conversion research to measure results of marketing efforts.

- We have done our own conversion study on travelers to Gold West Country. This information is helpful in determining our marketing direction and target markets.

C.5.3 Provide regional familiarization tours for state/regional/tribal/local tourism staff.

- We had a Gold West Familiarization tour for members to educate them on the Lewis and Clark route and sites in southwestern Gold West Country.
- We offer different site tours at the different locations in the cities that we hold our meeting.

Missouri River Country

Missouri River Country participated in the Open House of the Fort Peck Interpretive Center in May 2004. We set up our trade show booth and handed out Missouri River Country travel planners, Lewis and Clark literature, and calendar of events. There were 1500 people in attendance at the open house.

Missouri River Country board members have been working all year on the Lewis and Clark at the Confluence Event that is scheduled to take place April 29, 30, and May 1, 2005. We are expecting this to have a long-term affect on our area.

Board members are working with their communities in planning for the Corps of Discovery II to make it a successful and memorable event.

Missouri River Country has participated in the planning of the Montana Dinosaur Trail project. We have partnered with the museums, Russell Country, Custer Country, Yellowstone Country, and Travel Montana to create a brochure and website, which is expected to be completed in May 2005. We are also working with the BLM, FWP, Corps of Engineers, and USFWS on a birding trail brochure. The brochure is expected to be completed in the spring of 2005. Glasgow will be having a birding festival in June of 2005. Missouri River Country will possibly plan a birding FAM around that time.

Missouri River Country board members have been working with the Fort Peck Tribes, BLM, and FWP to develop boat ramps along the Missouri River. While some boat ramps have been put on hold, they are putting in a ramp at the Snowden Bridge site. Work continues to develop river access.

Montana Arts Council: MAC is pleased to report that the Governor appointed a tourism industry representative to the Montana Arts Council. Cyndy Andrus, executive director of the Bozeman CVB and Yellowstone Country member, has joined the council as of December, 2004. This is a continuation of the planned integration of leadership in both tourism and the arts in MAC and TAC. Two cultural representatives currently serve on the Tourism Advisory Council: Carolyn Valacich, Great Falls Symphony and Mark Browning, Custer County Art and Heritage Center.

Montana Promotion Division

A.2.3: Consider Options for Film Production Incentives

Montana Film Office

- Assisted in getting HB 584 introduced to the Montana House of Representatives. HB 584 is an incentive package for Film Production for Montana.

A.3.2: Promote Off-Peak Weekend Getaway Packages/Events to “Nearby” Markets

Consumer Marketing Program

- Due to a strengthening Canadian dollar and a notable increase in Canadian visitation to our neighboring states, Travel Montana initiated a promotion to build a re-newed presence in the Canadian market. It had been a number of years since Travel Montana developed a campaign specifically targeted at the Canadian traveler and it was felt that to make the greatest impact, a longer-term commitment would be needed to rebuild our presence. Travel Montana committed to a year-long newspaper packages campaign that ran in June and September of 2004, January and February of 2005 and is slated to run in April of 2005 as well. Thus concentrating the majority of the placement on off-peak seasons. Using data provided by ITRR on our Canadian visitors, we have found that our visitors primarily come from Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan (respectively); subsequently our newspaper buys concentrated on each of those provinces. Travel Montana partnered with the regions and cvbs to create packages and special discounts to entice weekend getaway travel from the Canadians. 2/3 of the newspaper ad featured a Montana message with a 1/3 of the ad reserved for package offerings from the regions and cvbs.

A.4.1: Work with MDT & Legislature to Implement Montana Scenic/Historic Byway Program

Tourism Development & Education Program

- Provided staff support for TAC and MDT’s Scenic/Historic Byway Advisory Council that completed draft rules for the statewide byway program. The draft rules were presented to and approved by the Montana Transportation Commission in December 2004. Implementation is expected in 2005. MPD will continue to be involved in the development of this program by MDT through technical or staff support assistance.

A.4.2: Use Collaborative Efforts to Create Special Designation Areas

Tourism Development & Education Program

- The TD&E program worked with a number of trail and tourism corridor projects in the past year. These included the Montana Birding Trail Bitterroot Pilot Project and statewide effort, the Montana Dinosaur Trail, and Hands of Harvest: the Craft Heritage Trails of North Central Montana.
- The Montana Birding Trail project was taken on as an MTRI Focus Group effort. MTRI is working with birding trail efforts in Northeast Montana as well as the Bitterroot to

assist in their development, encourage uniform site criteria, signage and development standards. These efforts include technical and financial assistance.

- The Montana Dinosaur Trail project is a collaborative effort of Custer, Missouri River, Russell and Yellowstone Countries, Parks Division of MT FWP, MT BLM, Bozeman CVB, Malta Chamber of Commerce, Travel Montana, 13 trail facilities in ten Montana communities. This effort has involved both technical and financial assistance and networking/education activities.
- The Hands of Harvest cultural tourism corridor is a project growing out of the statewide cultural tourism education effort involved in by Travel Montana, Montana Arts Council, Missoula Cultural Council, Montana Committee for the Humanities and other partners. The first edition of the Hands of Harvest guidebook was published in 2004. Travel Montana is assisting with publicity efforts through travel media contacts and financial assistance in publishing the first edition. There will be follow up and ongoing technical assistance efforts with this project. The Hands of Harvest executive committee has been asked to serve as a mentor group for other communities, regions, organizations interested in developing cultural tourism corridors.

A.6.2: Conduct Training on the Needs & Trends of Meeting/Convention Markets Travel/Conventions & Meetings Program

- At the Governor's Conference in 2004, Bill Geist of Zeitgeist Consulting conducted a seminar on "Succeeding in the Convention and Meetings Market-Montana Style."

A.7.1: Continue Strategic Research about Resident & Nonresident Travelers Consumer Marketing Program

- In January 2005, Travel Montana just completed an *Accountability and Strategic Tourism Research* project contracted with Longwoods International out of Toronto, Canada. The basic objectives of this research were:
 - ✓ Measure the impact and effectiveness of both our 2003/2004 winter and 2004 warm season tourism advertising campaigns.
 - ✓ Investigate Montana's image as a tourism destination in order to provide strategic information that will assist us in fine tuning future advertising campaigns.
- The benchmark research will be used to determine:
 - ✓ Awareness of both our advertising campaigns.
 - ✓ Impact of the advertising on Montana's image as a travel destination.
 - ✓ Short-term impact on *trips* to Montana in the year of the campaigns.
 - ✓ Carry-over impact on *trips planned* to Montana in the year following the advertising.

A.7.3: Conduct Regular Conversion Research to Measure Results of Marketing Efforts Consumer Marketing Program

- In 2004, Travel Montana conducted a *Winter Conversion Study* through Strategic Marketing and Research, Inc. (SMARI) out of Indianapolis, Indiana. The primary objective of the research was to measure the overall impact of each winter advertising effort with regard to the percentage of visitor conversion and spending generated by these visitors.

- In addition, the research provides Travel Montana with information on: the planning process and assessment of fulfillment material; competitive profile; the visitor profile, which includes details on income, education, etc. as well as PRIZM NE information to provide a psychographic/lifestyle profile of both responders and visitors; comparisons and exploration of visitors/non-visitors; travel behavior; special issues such as snowmobiling and the regulations in Yellowstone; media comparison; conversion overview; return on investment; and finally conclusions and recommendations.

A.7.8: Coordinate with the Private Sector for Enhanced Tracking/Reporting

Group Travel/Convention & Meetings Program

- Starting October 1, 2004, the Meetings and Convention Program, with the help of the IT staff, created a mechanism for tracking Montana suppliers that are accessing leads available for the Meetings/Conventions and Group Travel Programs. This is done with each supplier having an individual password to gain access to the leads listed on the Travel Montana intranet site.

A.8.4: Enhance Sharing of Tourism & Recreation Photo Libraries

Publicity/Photography Program

- Completed the creation of a photo CD and a press kit CD that are now packaged and available for use.

B.4.1: Enhance State Rest Areas & VICs with Montana Highlights

Montana Film Office

- Completed a Film Tourism Brochure in response to goals set in the strategic plan. This Film Tourism Brochure could be used to create film location loop tours for placement at VIC's

C.1.3: Develop Cooperative Marketing Campaigns between Agriculture & Tourism

Montana Film Office

- Conducted an extensive survey in 2003 of Working Ranches and Guest Ranches across Montana to collect information on the properties, and to ask if the owners if they would like to have their property used as a filming location. Once identified, the film office markets these ranches to the film industry at no cost to the owners.

Tourism Advisory Council

A.1.2: Build Awareness among Elected Officials about Tourism's Impacts & Benefits

- TAC's Public Awareness Committee worked with Travel Montana to update and format the Tourism 101 presentation. TAC developed a Tourism Presentation that council members can use for public outreach during the legislative session, with elected officials and at council meetings as an ice-breaker/education piece when elected officials or candidates are invited to address council meetings.

A.2.3: Consider Options for Film Production Incentives

- TAC formed a Task Force that worked with Travel Montana in developing policy recommendations for executive and legislative branch consideration. These policies are being considered by the 2005 Montana Legislature and are backed by the Schweitzer Administration.

A.4.1: Work with MDT & Legislature to Implement Montana Scenic/Historic Byway Program

- In 1004, Nine TAC members completed their work as the Scenic-Historic Byways Advisory Council (SHBAC). They presented the Montana Department of Transportation and the Montana Transportation Commission with draft rules for that agency's Montana Scenic/Historic Byway Program. The draft rules were accepted with slight modifications and the program should begin implementation in 2005.

A.7.1: Continue Strategic Research about Resident & Nonresident Travelers

- TAC's Research Committee has been actively involved with ITRR, the Regions and CVB's in identifying and approving funding for important research topics and information distribution methods that will benefit Montana's tourism and recreation industry.

A.7.2: Regularly Measure Montanans' Opinions about Tourism & Recreation

- Comment: TAC has supported ITRR's research into Montanans opinions about tourism and recreation.

B.3.3: Work with Air Carriers/Airports to Identify Needs & Enhance Air Service

- TAC's Transportation Task Force was formed to address this Action and Action B3.4. During 2004, the Montana Department of Transportation created an Air Service Study project that this committee agreed to serve as a resource for.

B.3.4: Advocate for Passenger Rail Service

- See response to B. 3.3.

C.5.4: Include Educational Presentations at Tourism & Recreation Meetings & Events

- TAC's Public Awareness Committee worked with Travel Montana to update and format the Tourism 101 presentation. TAC developed a Tourism Presentation that council members can use for public outreach during the legislative sessions and with elected officials. This presentation was used at council meetings to introduce legislators and candidates to the role of tourism in Montana as well as state, regional and local tourism efforts and organizations before the lawmakers and candidates were asked to address the council regarding tourism-related issues.

C.8.3: Obtain Funding to Enhance Regional Tourism Organizations

- No Action Yet

Yellowstone Country

A. MANAGING INFORMATION

A.1. Maintain the Montana Lodging Tax for Tourism Promotion and Development

- Yellowstone Country conducted presentations for area Chambers, businesses and education groups to help build awareness about benefits/impacts of tourism and the use of lodging taxes for promotion.

A.3. Create new Tourism & Recreation Products Through Packaging

- YC partnered with the Bozeman Chamber & CVB and the Montana Tribal Alliance to host Joe Veneto's "The Power of Packaging" seminar to help businesses assess the potential for developing local & regional packages for destination visitors.

A.5. Enhance Montana's Winter Recreation Products/Services

- YC continues efforts to promote Montana's niche in the destination ski and snowmobile markets, as well as promotion of the alternative winter activities through our Consumer Advertising projects.

B. MANAGING THE USE OF ASSETS

B.4. Create a Comprehensive & Interactive System of Visitor Information & Interpretation

- YC encourages all regional VICs to provide and enhance the facilities with community, regional and state promotional materials and highlights to help inform visitors about all the attractions and events throughout the state.

B.6. Assist Communities to Enhance Facilities/Services for Tourism Development

- YC continues to encourage communities to utilize Tourism Development facilities and services: i.e. CTAP, Special Events Grant, etc. Three regional communities applied for CTAP grants in 2004.

C. CREATING TEAMS

C.3. Increase awareness & Utilization of Business Assistance Programs

- Working with MSU-Bozeman College of Business to provide internships with Yellowstone Country and to meet with Human Resources Management Club to discuss tourism industry employment opportunities. Working with regional Chambers to develop job descriptions.

C.5. Enhance Montana's "Edu-Structure" to Support Tourism

- Yellowstone Country developed and implemented an informational training program for funded regional VICs to build staff awareness of the tourism industry at the community, regional and state levels